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C O N F I D E N T I A L MBABANE 000149

STATE FOR AF/E, AF/S, AF/RSA, IO/PKO
LONDON AND PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/19/2019

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SUBJECT: SWAZI FM REQUESTS COMMITMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL
ASSISTANCE REF MADAGASCAR

REF: (A) ANTANANARIVO 444 (B) STATE 63557

Classified By: CDA SARAH MORRISON FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

11. (C) SUMMARY: Swazi Foreign Minister Lutfo Dlamini stated that the current Swazi position on Madagascar was "basically" in accord with the urgent demarche (reftel B), but that for progress to be made toward the holding of elections, two initial issues must be resolved: (a) Funding for elections must be found, which he estimated to cost 30 million USD; (b) Neutral, respected security forces (e.g. UN Peacekeepers) must be in place to assure free and fair elections without intimidation and safety for all candidates. The FM requested active and immediate assistance from the USG to help secure assurances that these two conditions will be met, which he would like to report at the SADC Summit this weekend. He believes that with such assurances, SADC will have leverage to push forward coordinated efforts to reach a negotiated consensus on the process leading to elections. Post requests an update on any plans or even discussions that can be shared with the FM today or tomorrow regarding who will take responsibility for these two issues. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) FM Dlamini responded quickly to a personal note from the DCM attached to the demarche Post delivered that included all points in reftels. He was calling from a cell phone and reception was poor, cutting off a couple of times. CDA understood him to say that he had just been in discussion with the SADC secretariat regarding the upcoming extraordinary summit. He said he had also talked to Kofi Annan regarding (a) Madagascar is broke and SADC could not fund elections, which would probably cost 30 million USD, and (b) in order to convince Ravalomanana's people to seriously work toward early new elections and give up on forceful return to power, neutral security forces must be in place to guarantee the safety of candidates and prevent intimidation of voters. The FM believes that until some concrete international commitment is forthcoming to show the commitment to making an election in 2009 work, all parties know meetings are just talk and empty declarations.

13. (C) In a conversation with his counterpart in the FM, Embassy pol officer was told that the use of a SADC brigade to return Ravalomanana to power had dissipated when it became clear that South Africa and Botswana would not support it.

14. (C) ACTION REQUEST: The FM asked whether the USG could help him/SADC break the stalemate by helping to identify who would provide the election funding, and by securing an assurance that the UN would provide peacekeepers so that a peaceful, free and fair campaign and election could be held before the end of 2009. If I do not call him today, he will be calling me for a response from South Africa. If there have been no commitments yet on these issues, next best would be a statement that serious attention is being given to them by the USG/UN/AU/ or other influential parties, as may be the case, and should be concretized by (perhaps the AU summit in early July). Please advise appropriate response CDA should give to the FM.

MORRISON